



April 14, 2003

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Public Information Meeting Notice
Xcel Energy Lakefield Junction to Fox Lake 161 kV Transmission Line

Northern States Power, doing business as Xcel Energy, is planning to build new transmission lines in Southwestern Minnesota to help get the area's wind energy to market. The Minnesota Public Utilities Commission recently authorized Xcel Energy to build and upgrade a series of transmission lines in southwest Minnesota. In addition to supporting the growth of wind generation in the area, the improvements will strengthen the transmission system, and provide more reliable electrical service to local communities and rural cooperative customers.

One of the new lines is slated for Jackson and Martin counties to connect the Lakefield Junction Substation near Lakefield with the Fox Lake Substation near Sherburn. The specific location of this transmission line has not been determined. We plan to file a route permit application this summer with the Minnesota Environmental Quality Board (MEQB). The MEQB will select the final route.

As part of the MEQB application, we are required to file at least two route alternatives for the proposed transmission line. Before we file our application, we'd like to get input from property owners and area residents on possible routes. You have been identified as a landowner that may be impacted by the project or a government official we wanted to notify about the project. At our open house, we'll have maps with preliminary routes and information on structure types, right-of-way, the permitting process and other issues of interest. We've included a general fact sheet with this letter to provide you some background on the project.

You are invited to attend our meeting so we can answer your questions. If you cannot attend the meeting, please contact me at the number shown below and we will send you information or have an Xcel Energy representative arrange to speak with you at another time.

Please join us at an open house so that we can introduce this first project:

Wednesday, April 23
3 to 8 p.m.
Best Western Country Manor Inn
2007 Highway 71 North
Jackson, Minn.

You are welcome at anytime during the hours of the open house.

Pam Rasmussen
Permitting Analyst
Xcel Energy, Siting & Land Rights Department
715-839-4661 or 1-800-238-7968 ext. 4661
pamela.jo.rasmussen@xcelenergy.com

LAKEFIELD JUNCTION TO FOX LAKE

161 kV TRANSMISSION LINE

PROJECT SUMMARY

Xcel Energy is proposing to build a new 161 kV electric transmission line in southwestern Minnesota between the Lakefield Junction substation near Lakefield and the Fox Lake substation near Sherburn.

Project Need

The project is needed to help support the development of wind energy in SW Minnesota and South Dakota. The existing electric transmission system is incapable of supporting additional wind generation development in this area. The Minnesota Public Utilities Commission granted a Certificate of Need for several transmission line projects Docket Number E-002/CN-01-1958 on March 11, 2003. This project is the first of several transmission lines Xcel Energy will be building in southwestern Minnesota and eastern South Dakota to support wind power development.

Project Approvals

Xcel Energy will soon file an application with the Minnesota Environmental Quality Board (MEQB) for a Route Permit. In that application we will include two routing options for the MEQB to review along with the necessary environmental and land use information. The MEQB will determine what route the line will follow and the types of structures to be used. The MEQB process is open to the public with several opportunities for comment, including scoping meetings and public hearings.

Project Components

The project includes the construction of a new 24-mile 161 kV transmission line from the Lakefield Junction Substation to the Fox Lake Substation. We are proposing that a section of the line from the Lakefield Junction Substation to Jackson be built as a double circuit 161 kV/69 kV line. The 69 kV circuit line would be used to satisfy local load serving needs in the Jackson area. A project route map is shown on the back of this handout. Two preliminary routes have been identified at this time, one paralleling an existing Alliant Energy 161 kV line and the other paralleling Interstate 90.

Xcel Energy will be proposing the use of steel single pole, davit arm structures and steel single pole, double circuit 161 kV/69 kV structures.

There will be some work required at Alliant Energy's Lakefield Junction and Fox Lake substations. There will be no expansion of the Lakefield Junction substation and a very minor expansion of the Fox Lake substation. Xcel Energy is working in close coordination on this project with Alliant Energy.

Public Input

Xcel Energy welcomes your comments. The April 23 public meeting is designed to introduce the project to the public and to gather input on your thoughts regarding the proposed project routes and design.

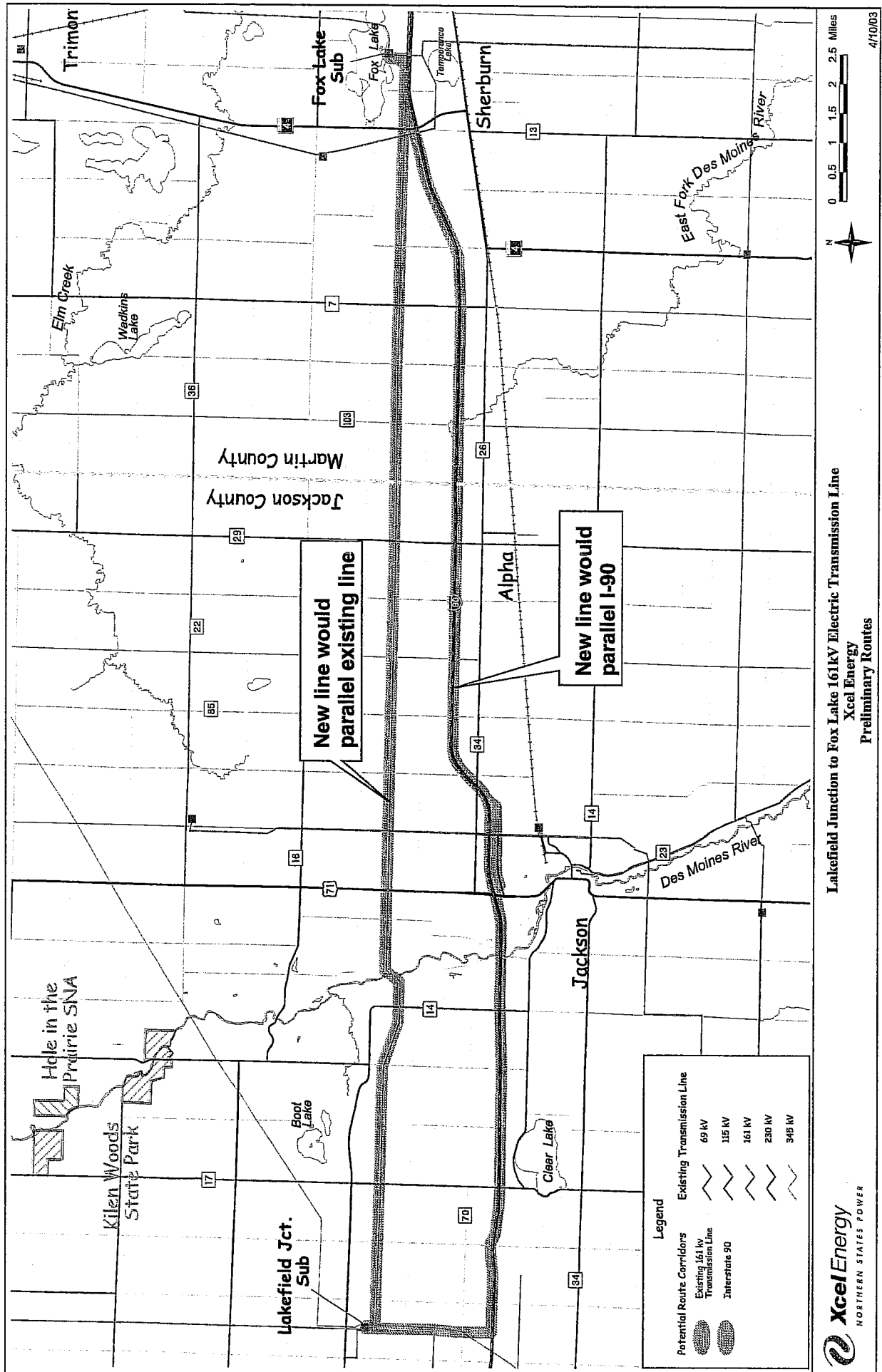
Schedule

Xcel Energy plans to file its application with the MEQB this summer. Once an application is filed, a schedule of the regulatory review process will be developed by the MEQB and provided to interested parties. The review process can last up to a year. Right-of-way acquisition is scheduled to begin in the fall of 2004, pending MEQB approvals and construction is scheduled for Summer 2005.

Contact Information

For more information on the project, please contact Pam Rasmussen in the Siting & Land Rights department at Xcel Energy. She can be reached at 1-800-238-7968 extension 4661 or pamela.jo.rasmussen@xcelenergy.com. If she is unavailable, please leave a message or contact Ron Flynn at extension 2433. You can also visit Xcel Energy's web site for more information on the project. Go to www.xcelenergy.com, click on Home, About Us, Transmission Projects.







Lakefield to Fox Lake 161 kV Transmission Line Project

COMMONLY ASKED QUESTIONS REGARDING TRANSMISSION LINE RIGHT-OF-WAYS AND EASEMENTS

The Lakefield to Fox Lake Project requires a Certificate of Need from the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission (PUC) and a Route Permit from the Minnesota Environmental Quality Board (MEQB). The PUC issued a Certificate of Need order to Xcel Energy on March 11, 2003. Xcel Energy is now pursuing the route permit from the MEQB. Once the MEQB approved the route for the transmission line Xcel Energy will then pursue construction of the facility. In order to build the lines, we will need to acquire property easements for the transmission line right-of-way.

1. WHAT IS AN EASEMENT?

An easement is defined as a permanent land right acquired by a person or party to use the land or property of another for a special or particular purpose. Landowners are paid a fair price for the easement and can continue to use the land for most uses, such as agriculture.

2. WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN A RIGHT-OF-WAY AND AN EASEMENT?

These terms are used interchangeably but an easement is the permanent land right and the right-of-way is the land area on which the facilities are located.

3. HOW WIDE OF RIGHT-OF-WAY WILL BE NEEDED FOR THE PROPOSED TRANSMISSION LINE?

The right-of-way (ROW) will be 80 in width (40 feet on each side of the center of the transmission line). Exceptions to this will be where the transmission line route changes direction and turns significantly, which would require down guys and anchors outside the 80 foot strip. In addition, if the route follows a road, the ROW requirements for private property will be 45 feet with some of the easement overhanging the road.

4. WHAT EASEMENT RIGHTS WILL BE NEEDED FOR THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE POWER LINE?

Xcel Energy will require an easement that allows for surveying, construction, operation and maintenance of a transmission line across a defined strip of the landowner's property. The easement will be in the name of the Xcel Energy operating company in this state, which is Northern States Power Company-Minnesota.

5. WHAT ACTIVITIES ARE ALLOWED WITHIN THE EASEMENT AREA?

Land within the right-of-way may be used for any purpose that does not interfere with the construction or operation of the transmission line. In agricultural areas, the land may be used for crop production and pasture. In areas where the land will be developed, streets, lawn extensions, underground utilities, and curb and gutters, etc., may cross the right-of-way with permission from the utility.

6. WHAT ARE THE MAIN BUILDING AND PLANTING RESTRICTIONS IN THE EASEMENT?

The primary building and planting restrictions are: 1) prohibiting the construction of buildings or structures within the right-of-way strip, and 2) prohibiting the planting of tall growing species of trees in the right-of-way strip.

7. WHY CAN'T BUILDINGS BE PLACED IN THE RIGHT-OF-WAY?

If a building or structure located within the right-of-way were to catch fire, it could burn into the power line and take the line out of service for an extended period. When a power line is out of service it affects the ability of thousands of people to have the ability to heat and light their homes and businesses. At certain times of the year, especially during winter months, outages are not only an inconvenience; they may become life threatening. Utilities have determined that the best way to prevent the possibility of these types of outages is to restrict the placement of structures within the right-of-way. In addition, access to the line is required if an outage occurs. The construction of building or other structures within the right-of-way could hamper maintenance crews from accessing the line to make the necessary repairs.

8. WHY DOESN'T THE UTILITY BUY A STRIP OF LAND FOR THE LINE INSTEAD OF TAKING AN EASEMENT INTEREST?

Utilities occasionally purchase right-of-ways for transmission lines in fee title. However, we have found that in most cases, landowners prefer to retain the ownership of the property so that they can maintain better control over the use of the property, subject of course to the limitations of the transmission line easement. In many cases, the retention of the ownership of the right-of-way by the landowner provides the landowner with continued use of the property for such things as agricultural operation, yard extensions or open areas adjacent to residences. In each of these cases the property continues to contribute positively and productively to the property owner as well as the public. Utilities are simply interested in assuring that their right to operate the transmission line is protected. In most cases, adjacent uses pose no threat to the line nor do they create a hazard to the public.

9. HOW WILL THE PRESENCE OF A TRANSMISSION LINE ON MY PROPERTY AFFECT THE VALUE OF MY PROPERTY?

In recent years, the utility industry and others have conducted numerous studies evaluating this issue. Specifically, is there a loss in property value caused by the proximity to power lines? All of the studies that we have reviewed to date--including regional and national studies that have been completed by competent, certified appraisers using valid appraisal analyses methodologies--have shown no significant loss in value as a result of the transmission line being in near proximity to the property. These studies generally use paired sale analysis, which compares properties that have power lines located on them or that abut powerlines, with those properties where no power lines are present. These properties are also compared on the basis of similar size, similar features and amenities.

Overall the large body of studies has not supported the claim that property values are significantly lowered as a result of proximity adjacent to a transmission line. In fact, some studies have shown that in some relatively exclusive subdivisions, lots that have been strategically designed to abut power line right-of-ways have sold first--and in some cases, for more money than those lots located away from the power line. These studies have indicated that in some cases properties abutting a power line have sold for nearly 8 percent above the asking price for the other lots. Purchasers indicated that they were willing to pay more for those lots because of the buffer created by the extra green space associated with the power line right-of-way. It is important for landowners to remember that every property is different and that the final determination of the value of their property and how it is affected by the power line will be addressed by the appraiser in the individual analysis of their property.

For more information on right-of-way issues, please contact Ron Flynn, Team Lead, Siting and Land Rights at 1-800-238-7968, extension 2433 or ronald.f.flynn@xcelenergy.com.



GENERAL RIGHT-OF-WAY INFORMATION MINNESOTA

This handout has been developed to provide information about the basic protections afforded landowners under State and Federal Laws regulating the acquisition of real estate for public use to build transmission lines and substations.

POLICIES AND PRACTICES FOR RIGHT-OF-WAY-ACQUISITION USED IN CONSTRUCTION OF ELECTRIC TRANSMISSION LINES.

After all of the necessary approvals from State and local governments have been obtained, Xcel Energy representatives will proceed to acquire easements for the location and construction of the new line following the standard sequence of practices described below.

- **ABSTRACT OF TITLE**

The right-of-way representative or other persons engaged by the utility will complete a search of the public records of all lands involved in the project. A title report will then be developed to determine the legal description of the property, the owner(s) of record of the property, and information regarding easements, liens, restrictions, encumbrances and other conditions of record.

- **SURVEY PERMISSION**

A right-of-way representative would then contact each property owner or his or her representative to inform them of the project. The right-of-way representative will describe the need for the transmission line and how it may affect their property. The utility's survey crews would then need to enter the property to complete their preliminary survey work.

- **SURVEY STAKING**

After the power line design is completed, the line is then staked. This means that the survey crew locates each structure or pole on the ground and places a surveyor's stake to mark the structures' location. By doing this, the right-of-way representative can show the landowner exactly where the structure(s) will be located on their property.

- **DOCUMENT PREPARATION**

The utility will prepare all of the documents required to complete each transaction. Some of the documents that may be required include: Easement, Purchase Agreement or Contract, Deed, and Clearing and Construction Notice. These documents will be in the name of the Xcel Energy operating company in this state, which is Northern States Power Company-Minnesota

- **ACQUISITION PROCESS**

Each property on which easement rights are to be acquired will be viewed by the utility's representative(s) to determine the amount of just compensation for the rights to be obtained. In the event that a complicated appraisal problem exists, or if statutory requirement in the local jurisdiction dictates, an appraisal will be completed by the utility's representative(s) to determine the value of the rights being acquired. The utility will make an offer to the owner to obtain the property rights.

- **NEGOTIATIONS**

A utility right-of-way representative will begin the negotiating process by presenting the required legal document(s) to the property owner. They will also provide maps of the line route or site, maps showing the landowner's parcel, and an offer of compensation for the easement or purchase. The landowner will be allowed a reasonable amount of time in which to consider the offer and to present material to the utility that the owner believes is relevant to deciding the value of the property.

If the utility and the landowner cannot agree on the amount of compensation being offered by the utility as being fair and equitable, or if the landowner just wants a second opinion as to what is fair and just compensation, the landowner may have a second appraisal made on his property. Xcel Energy provides up to \$500 toward the landowner's attorney/appraiser fees, as long as the appraisal conforms to the conditions of prevailing State Statutes, and follows good appraisal practices.

- **NEGOTIATED SETTLEMENT**

The representative for the utility will work closely with the landowner to try to arrive at a negotiated settlement that is fair and acceptable to all parties. In nearly all cases, the utility's representatives are able to work with the landowners to address their concerns. However, in some cases a negotiated settlement is not possible and the landowner may choose to have an independent third party determine the value for the rights taken. This is accomplished through the exercise of the right of Eminent Domain by the utility. The process of exercising the right of Eminent Domain is called Condemnation.

- **ACQUISITION BY EMINENT DOMAIN (CONDEMNATION)**

In any project that requires easements for power plants or power line construction, Xcel Energy's goal is to offer fair and equitable compensation to landowners. Condemnation proceedings will only be initiated by the utility when reasonable efforts to negotiate an agreement at what is believed to be just compensation have failed.

Although Xcel Energy's preference is to negotiate with the landowner, there may be times where this is impossible and the utility and the landowner reach an impasse. If the power line construction schedule has reached a critical stage, the utility would initiate a procedure known as the "quick take" process.

"Quick take" steps:

1. Xcel Energy files a "quick take" petition with the court.
2. The landowner receives notice of the petition, which starts a 90-day process.
3. The court schedules a hearing to establish need.
4. If the court finds that the project is in the public interest, it can grant the "quick take" petition.
5. Xcel Energy deposits the independent appraised value of the property easement with the court or landowner within a 90-day period.
6. The court issues notice of 90-day "quick take" order.
7. After the 90-day period expires, title for the easement transfers to Xcel Energy.
8. Construction can begin.

During the 90-day process, the court also appoints a three-person condemnation commission. The three people must be knowledgeable of real estate issues and residents of the county in which the "quick take" process was initiated. The court appoints a chairman, who schedules viewings of the "quick take" easements. Next, the commission schedules a valuation hearing. Xcel Energy and landowners can testify as to the value of the easements. (Xcel Energy provides up to \$500 toward the landowner's attorney/appraiser fees.) The commission then makes an award as to the value of the property. Each party has 40 days from the filing of the award to appeal to district court for a jury trial. The jury hears land value evidence and makes its award. At any point in this process, the case can be dismissed if the parties reach a settlement.

Although not part of the eminent domain process, Minnesota law also provides for the following:

- The landowner can request easement payment in 10 installments, plus 8 percent interest, instead of a lump-sum payment.
- Landowners can apply for state tax credits on property that is encumbered by an easement.

• **THE CONSTRUCTION PROCESS**

Once the easement or land rights have been acquired and immediately prior to construction, the utility's right-of-way representative will contact the property owner and discuss the construction schedule.

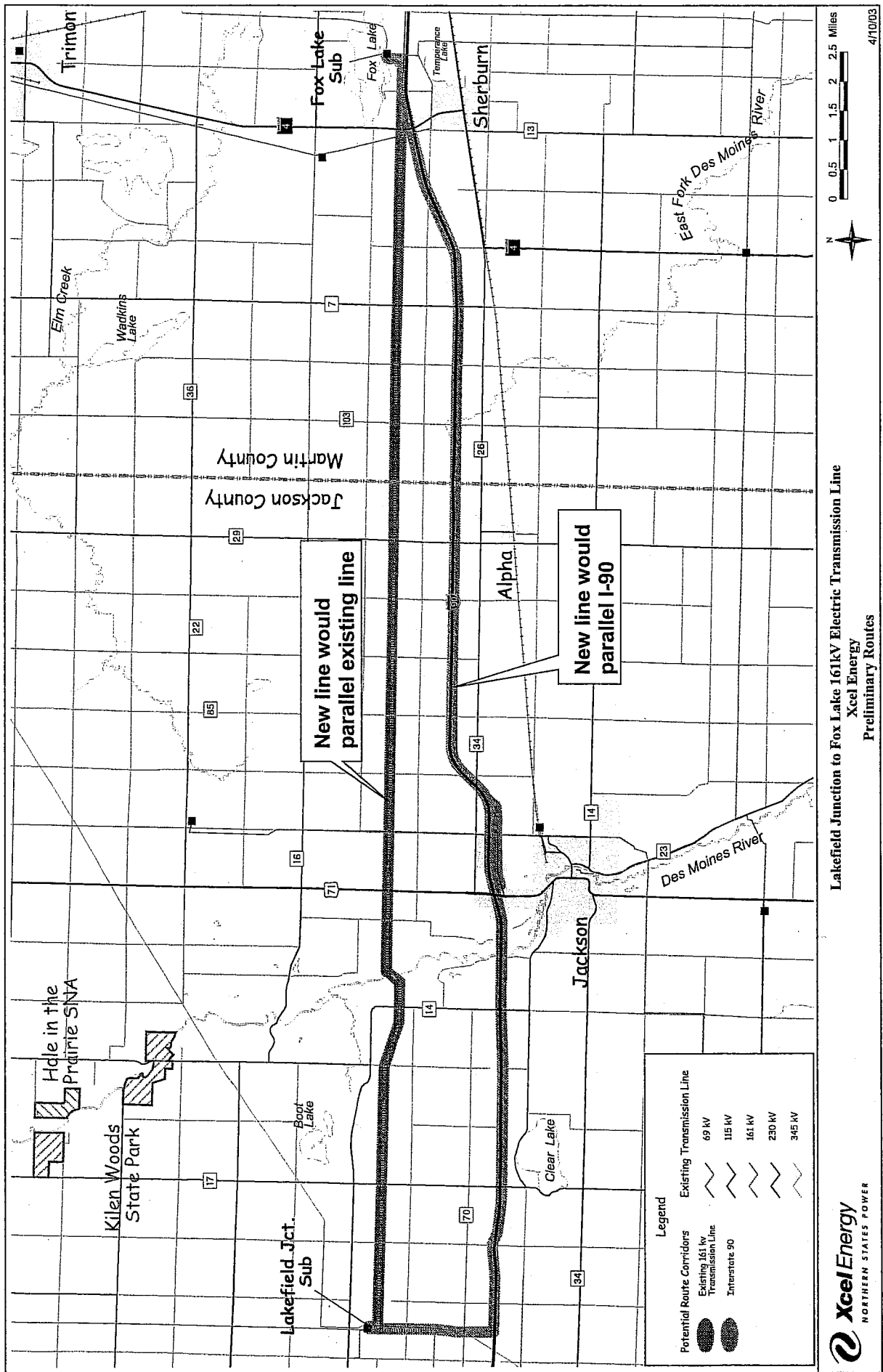
During construction the following may be required:

- Temporary removal or relocation of certain fences
- Installation of temporary (or permanent at land owner request) gates
- Early harvest of crops where possible
- Removal or relocation of equipment and livestock from the right-of-way.

- **RESTORATION AND CLEAN UP**

The right-of-way representative will contact each property owner after construction is completed to see if any damage has occurred as a result of the utility's project. If damage has occurred to crops, fences, or the property, the utility will fairly reimburse the landowner for the damages caused. In some cases the utility may engage an outside contractor to restore the damaged property to as near as possible to its original condition.

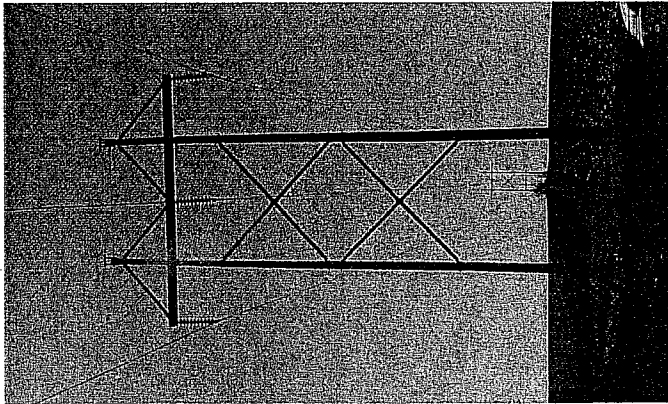
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Lakefield to Fox Lake 161 kV Transmission Project

Proposed Structure Types

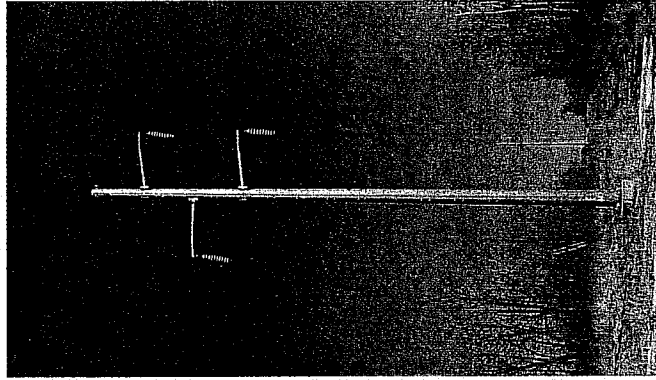
Existing Alliant Energy Structure



161 kV H-frame - Wood Structure

Existing Alliant Energy structure
Structure option on route section between
Jackson and Fox Lake substation that parallels
Alliant Energy 161 kV transmission line

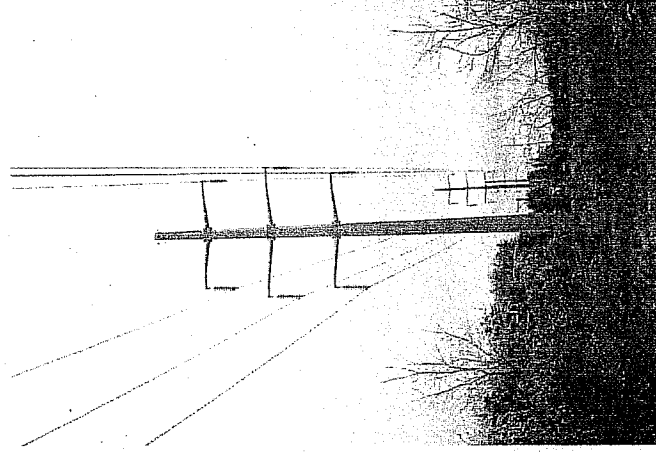
Proposed Structure



161 kV Davit Arm - Steel
Structure

Route section between Jackson and Fox Lake
Substation
Structure option for both existing 161 kV
transmission and I-90 routes

Proposed Structure

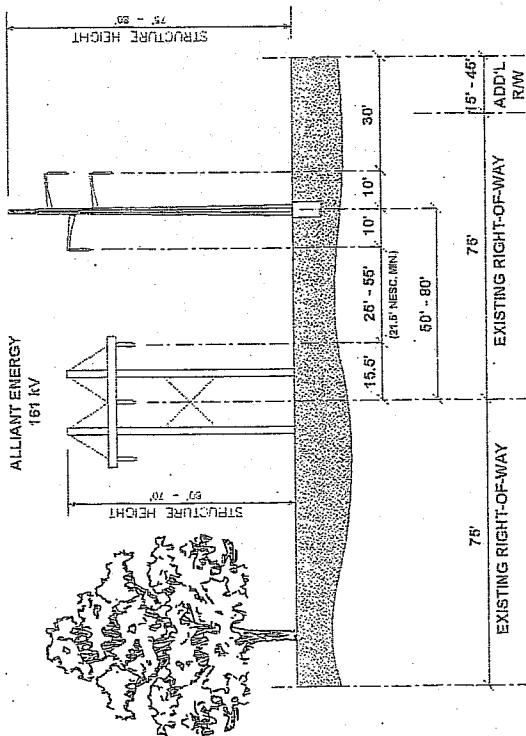


161 kV/69 kV Double Circuit Davit Arm Steel
Structure

Route section between Lakefield Junction
Substation and Jackson
Structure option for both existing 161 kV
transmission and I-90 routes

XCEL ENERGY
161 kV

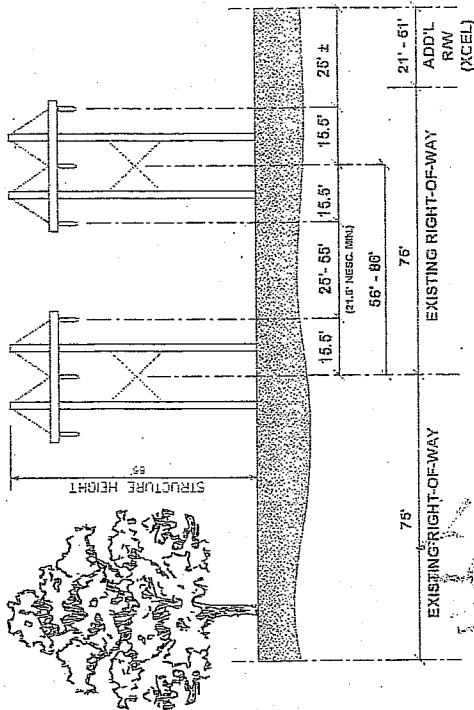
ALLIANT ENERGY
161 kV



Alliant Energy 161 kV Line and Xcel Energy 161 kV
Davit-Arm Structure Right-of-Way Requirements

ALLIANT ENERGY
161 kV

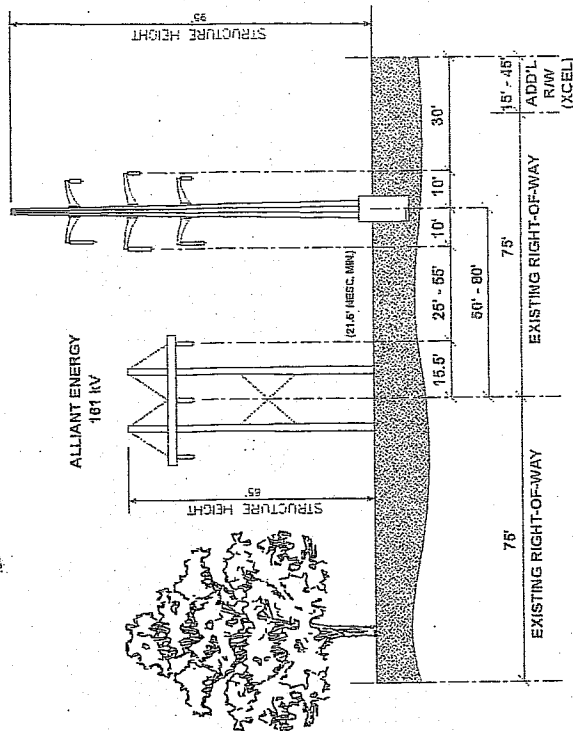
XCEL ENERGY
161 kV



Alliant Energy 161 kV Line and Xcel Energy 161 kV
H-Frame Structure Right-of-Way Requirements

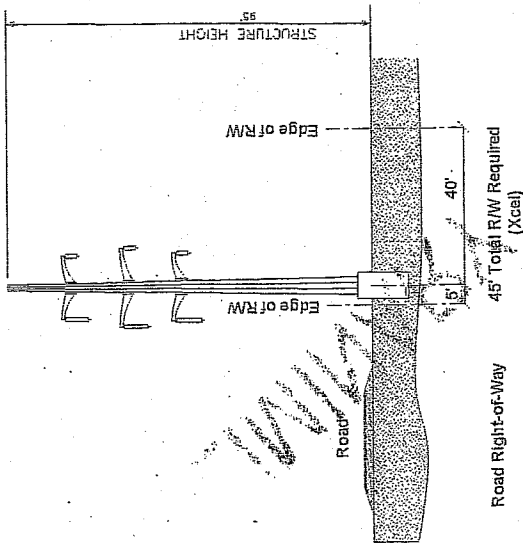
XCEL ENERGY
161/69 kV

ALLIANT ENERGY
161 kV



Alliant Energy 161 kV Line and Xcel Energy Double Circuit 161 kV/69 kV
Davit-Arm Structure Right-of-Way Requirements

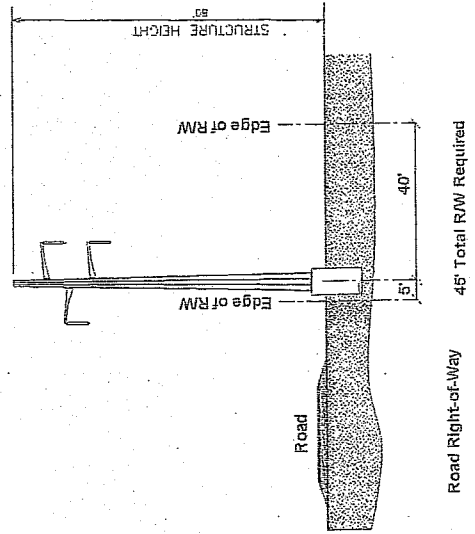
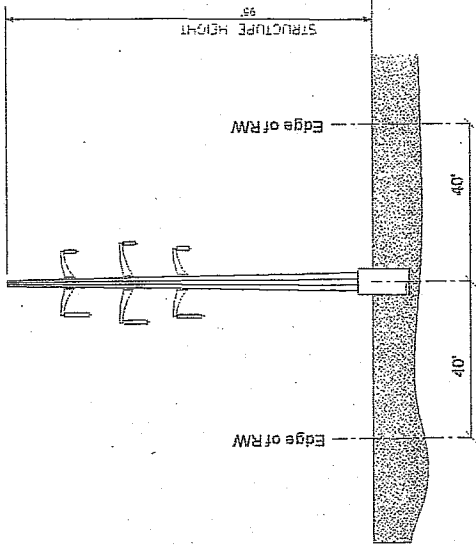
PRELIMINARY



Xcel Energy 161 kV/69 kV Structure
Right-of-Way Requirements
Adjacent to a Road

80' Total Right-of-Way

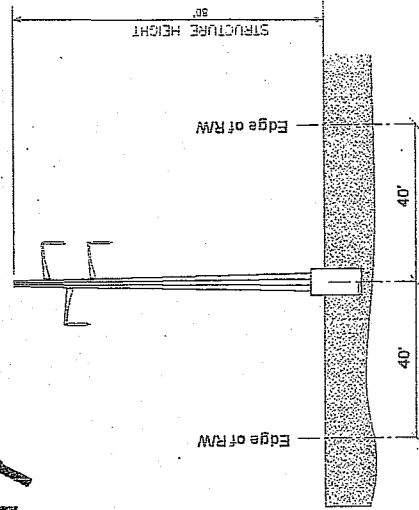
Xcel Energy 161 kV/69 kV Structure
Right-of-Way Requirements



Xcel Energy 161 kV Davit Arm Structure
Right-of-Way Requirements
Adjacent to a Road

80' Total Right-of-Way

Xcel Energy 161 kV Davit Arm Structure
Right-Of-Way Requirements



Magnetic Field Distribution

Magnetic Flux Density (milligauss) (3 feet above ground)																		
Distances shown are to centerline of transmission line																		
	Structure Type	Loading	Amps	(300')	(250')	(200')	(150')	(100')	(50')	(25')	0	25	50	100	150	200'	250'	300'
Lakefield to Fox Lake 161 kV line	H-Frame	average	400	0.8	1.2	1.8	3.2	7	23	46	62	46	23	7	3.5	2.0	1.3	0.9
		peak	660	1.2	1.7	2.7	5	11	34	69	93	69	35	11	5	3.0	1.9	1.3
	Single Pole Davis Arm	average	400	0.5	0.7	1.1	1.9	4.0	13	25	35	24	13	4.5	2.2	1.3	0.8	0.6
		peak	660	0.8	1.1	1.8	3.1	6.6	21	42	58	40	22	7.4	3.6	2.1	1.4	1.0
	Double Circuit 161/69 kV line	average	440/68	0.6	0.8	1.2	2.2	4.8	14	26	28	16	9	3.3	1.7	1.0	0.7	0.5
		peak	660/125	0.8	1.2	1.9	3.3	7.2	21	38	42	24	13	4.9	2.5	1.5	1.0	0.7

PRELIMINARY

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Agency Information

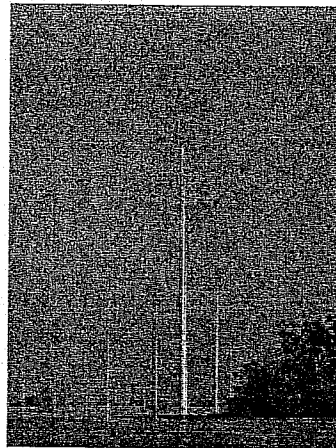
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TRANSMISSION LINE ROUTING

The Minnesota Legislature has established a state policy to locate large electric power facilities in an orderly manner compatible with environmental preservation and the efficient use of resources. The Minnesota Environmental Quality Board has the responsibility for routing transmission lines capable of operation at 100 kilovolts or more. The legislature directed the EQB to designate routes that minimize adverse human and environmental impact while ensuring continuing electric power system reliability and integrity and ensuring that electric energy needs are met and fulfilled in an orderly and timely fashion.



- [Background](#)
- [Projects](#)
- [General documents](#)

BACKGROUND

Under the Power Plant Siting Act (Minnesota Statutes §§ 116C.51 to 116C.69) a route permit from the Minnesota Environmental Quality Board is required to build a high voltage transmission line. A HVTL is a transmission line and associated facilities capable of operation at 100 kilovolts or more. The EQB has adopted rules for the administration of transmission line route permits ([Minnesota Rules Chapter 4400](#)).

FULL REVIEW

The EQB rules establish the requirements for submitting and processing a permit application. The applicant must identify in the application the preferred route for the transmission line and one alternative route. As part of the permitting process, the EQB prepares an Environmental Impact Statement on the project and holds a contested case hearing. The EQB has up to one year from the time the application is accepted to complete the process and make a decision on the permit. [See Full Review Process diagram \(attached\)](#)

ALTERNATIVE REVIEW

An alternative permitting process is available for certain smaller-size transmission lines identified in Minn. Stat. § 116C.575. This alternative process does not require the preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement (a shorter Environmental Assessment is required) or the holding of a contested case hearing conducted by an administrative law judge (a hearing conducted by the agency is required) or the identification of an alternative site. This alternative process must be completed within six months from the time the application is accepted. [See Alternative Review Process diagram \(Attached\)](#)

Environmental Quality Board Links

- Home
- About the board
- Animal agriculture / Feedlots
- Statutes and rules
- Energy facilities
- Environmental review
- Genetic engineering
- Glossary
- Related sites
- Sustainable development
- Urban development
- Water

Data Links

- Census 2000
- Children's Report Card
- Geographic Data Clearinghouse
- Minnesota Milestones
- Datatnet
- ▶ All

Mapping Links

- MN Mapper
- EPPL7/EPIC software
- ▶ All

Content Links

- Media releases
- IssueWatch
- Listening Posts
- Environmental projects
- Reports

Search tools

- City/county search
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LOCAL REVIEW

For certain projects the proposer can elect to seek authorization from local units of government rather than from the EQB. Qualifying projects are identified in Minn. Stat. § [116C.576](#).

CERTIFICATE OF NEED

Prior to the issuance of a route permit, a certificate of need from the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission is required for a proposed HVTL. There are a few exceptions based on the voltage and the length of the line ([Minn. Stat. § 216B.243](#)).

GENERAL DOCUMENTS

- [Statement of need and reasonableness in the matter of the proposed adoption of amendments to the EQB power plant siting rules](#): Explains the rationale for each provision of the draft rules (82p., 212K, PDF 5.0) | [report summary](#)

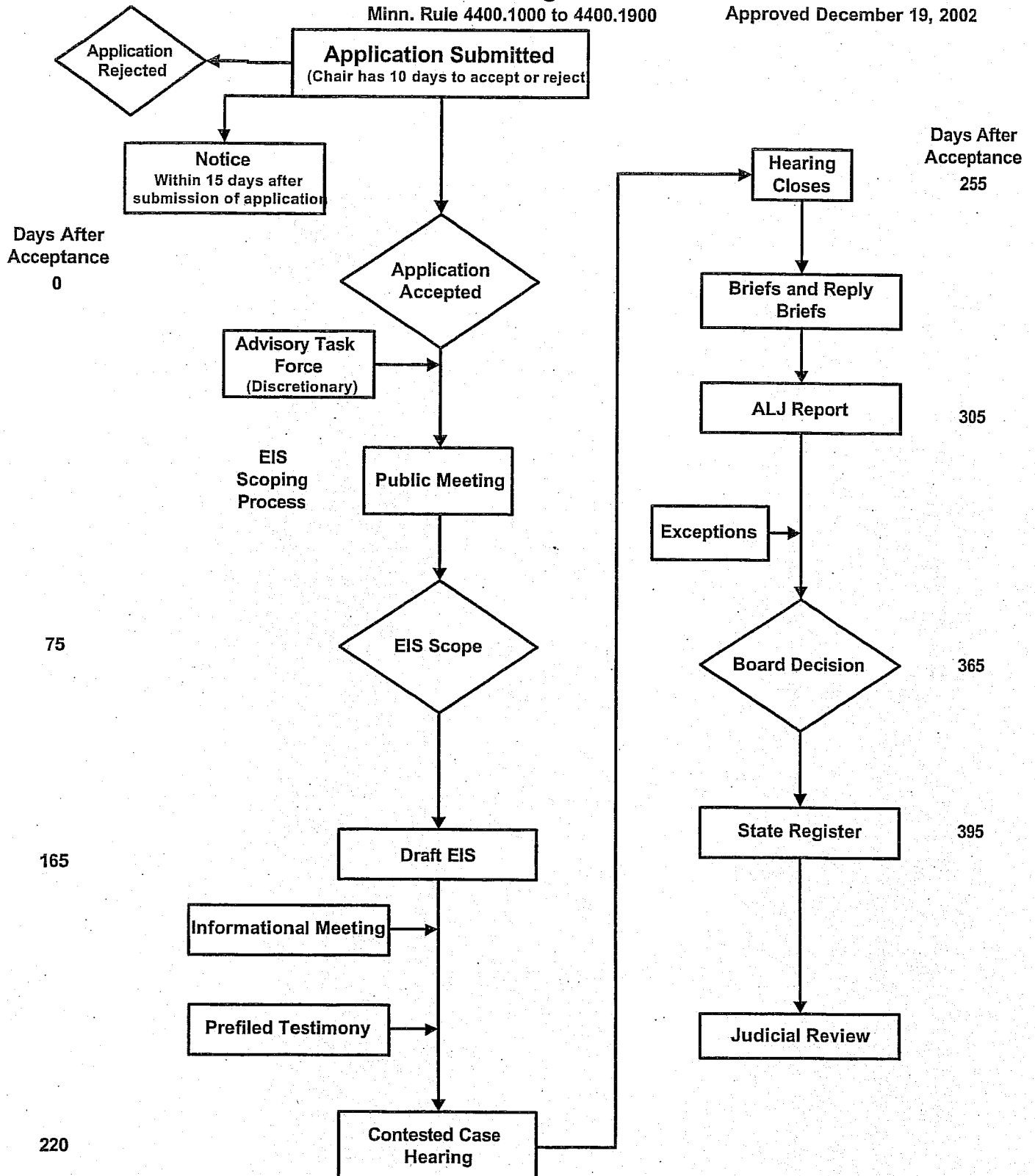
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[About this site](#)

HVTL Route and Power Plant Site Full Permitting Process

Minn. Rule 4400.1000 to 4400.1900

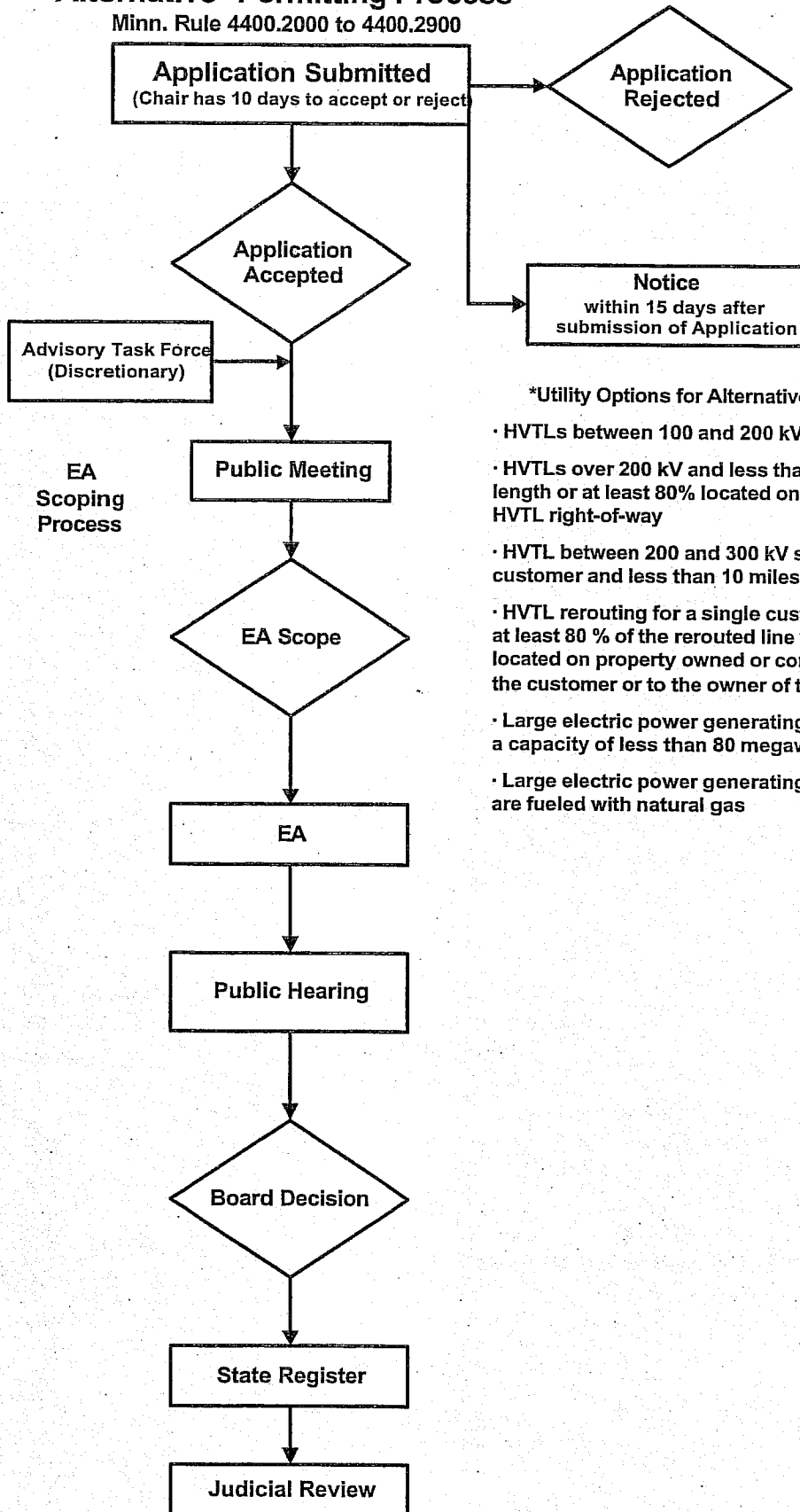
Approved December 19, 2002



HVTL Route and Power Plant Site Alternative* Permitting Process Minn. Rule 4400.2000 to 4400.2900

Approved December 19, 2002

Days After
Acceptance
0



50

90

120

180

210